

D# 10 HELIPADS

General Description

In 2008, the City amended Title IV to allow the limited use of helipads in the R-8 (Residential-eight units per net acre). In a Planning and Development Committee report issued July 14, 2008, the Committee advised Council to adopt the amendment to Title IV and also recommended a broader review of the use of helipads in other zones. This docket item completes that review and recommends a number of changes to increase equity and fairness in rules governing the use of helipads in the City.

Impact Analysis

Effect on rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the rate of growth, development, and the conversion of land created by the proposed changes.

Effect on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities created by the proposed changes.

Effect on the rate of population and employment growth

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on the rate of population and employment growth created by the proposed changes.

Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable

Not applicable. The proposed is not anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan.

Effect on general land values or housing costs

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on general land values or housing costs created by the proposed changes.

Whether capital improvements or expenditures are being made or completed as expected

Not applicable. The proposed changes do not affect capital improvements or expenditures.

Consistency with GMA, the Plan, and Countywide Planning Policies

Not applicable. The proposal is not a subject that is anticipated by these documents.

Effect on critical areas and natural resource lands

Not applicable. There are no anticipated effects on critical areas and natural resource lands. Construction of a helipad would still be required to undergo building review and comply with all critical area regulations.

Effect on other considerations

Staff is proposing this change to ensure consistency between the new regulations for helipads adopted in 2008 for the R-8 zone and other regulations for helipads throughout the City. Until

2008, helipads were allowed if accessory to a primary use only with a Hearing Examiner Conditional Use Permit in all industrial zones (Light Industrial, Medium Industrial, Heavy Industrial) in the Employment Area Valley land use designation, in the CO (Commercial Office) zone, in the COR (Commercial/Office/Residential) zone, in part of the CA (Commercial Arterial) zone, and in the UC-N2 (Urban Center- North 2). Last year, helipads were permitted outright if accessory to a primary use for those portions of the R-8 zone that fronted Lake Washington and if able to meet a number of criteria. The proposed changes provide a consistent approach to the regulation and limitation of helipad usage in the City of Renton.

Given that under limited circumstances, a helipad can be operated from residential property without a use permit from the City, it is a consistent application of regulations to allow helipads in business and industrial areas without a use permit from the City. In all cases, helipad design and safety is regulated by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration), which ensures that helicopters have a safe approach, take-off, and landing area through a required Aeronautical Study. Noise concerns would also be limited through a restriction on hours of operation (except in case of emergency). Helipads would also need to be integrated into the design of the primary use, to minimize impacts to adjacent property. These restrictions reasonably restrict the use of helipads, while maintaining public health and safety and minimizing impacts of their use on surrounding properties.

Historically, helipads have been limited to only those parts of the CA zone that are outside of business districts. However, 2008 changes to the CA zone extended the policies and regulations formerly applied to the business districts throughout the CA zone. This essentially made all CA zoned properties a de facto business district. Given that helipad use has always been prohibited in business districts because of the desired intensity of commercial and mixed uses in that area, it is no longer appropriate to allow future helipad activities in the CA.

Staff Recommendation

Adopt the following revisions to Title IV:

- Disallow the use of helipads in the CA zone.
- Allow helipads, if they are accessory to the primary use of a property in all industrial zones (IL, IM, IH), the CO zone, the COR zone, and the UC-N2 zone subject to the following conditions: the helipad is architecturally and functionally integrated into the primary use, the helipad is approved by the FAA, flight hours are limited to 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. except for emergencies, and the property owner keeps documentation of compliance with the above requirements.
- Continue to require commercial heliports as a Hearing Examiner Conditional Use in the IM (Medium Industrial) and UC-N2 zones.

Implementation Requirements

Amend the following sections of Title IV, as shown in the attached document:

- 4-2-060 Zoning Use Table- "Helipads Accessory to the Primary Use" line only.
- 4-2-080 Conditions Associated with Zoning Use Tables- add a note 114.